

THE MARRIAGE FEAST BE MARIE TUDOR GARLAND

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THE MARRIAGE FEAST

BY

MARIE TUDOR GARLAND

AUTHOR OF "THE POTTER'S CLAY," "THE WINGED SPIRIT," "HINDU MIND TRAINING," ETC.

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an I

After man had conceived many gods
In his own image,
The woman said:
"The time has come
For me to conceive a god."
And the woman conceived,
And gave birth to herself.



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AUTHOR'S NOTE.—A few of the poems in this volume have appeared, in the same or a different form, in two previous volumes, The Potter's Clay and The Wingèd Spirit.

M. T. G.

Part I MARRIAGE



THE MARRIAGE FEAST

I CRY
What honour bring you
Who stand across the board
With turbulent disquietude of eyes?
What honour bear you
To animate this impending purple feast?

Nay, come not to this board
To mourn your dead.
Come not here with spent unburied dream,
Nor with old wrong clinging with lethal breath
To unfulfilled song.
Nay, if memory haunting cloud the sun,
If unseen thongs curb your unrest,
If arms are burdened, hands unfree, oppressed,
Turn from this board and go,
Go lie with death.

For here shall be held Highest festival. Here only the free shall give joyously To life that life may be.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

You who come in quest of life Must come a pregnant guest. You who would penetrate the veil of life Must come no beggar, but warm With harvest of garnered fruit, Heavy with vintage.

So shall the torment of your hunger
Be appeased.
So shall you bring all beauty here
To couch and lie with me;
So shall you mirrored see
Star-deep
All beauty in my eyes;
So shall you reach the crested summit of my breast
Where speech is lost
And memory fades to dream . . .

I come no barren comer
To this feast.
I come with hoarded opulence
Of fruity wine,
I come with grape new-gathered
From the vine,
I come resplendent
With mighty breasts
To bourgeon melody as yet unborn.
I come with cool and gleaming thighs

THE MARRIAGE FEAST

Crowned with power to cradle Your songs and your sighs. I come with limbs Whose strength shall bend and bow To eagle-speed your arrow. I come with arms That shall enfold and hold you, Arms that shall thrust you far and free. With hands that shall turn Your hunger and your drouth, That shall be as lips and mouth, Passion-quelling in the end. I come with hair that shall shield And shelter you by day, And in the night shall be as flame. I come with lips That shall infuse your storm-pressed heart With lightnings for your thunder. I come with eyes where you shall find Sunny fields for leaping, and for play, And shade for sleeping, Eves where you shall find The gleam of a flying soul That for all your piracy You cannot hold.

DAWN

ALL through the years I heard your voice, And I thought that I should find you Just beyond the farther hill;

Yet ever you eluded,
Seeking the deeper vales.
The shades grew darker,
And I lost the way.
Then when I thought
The least to find you,
You were the dawning day.

SANCTUARY

In a night of storm
I was carried on a sea of pain.
Again and yet again it flung me back
Bleeding upon the rocks.
But my spirit would not yield,
And wore a smile upon its lips.

Now at the dawn
I lie within the sanctuary of your arms.
My spirit weeps at last;
It cannot bear the pang of living joy.

THE STORM

Beloved, in the beauty of your coming To my chamber. Was the sense of a glad day Newly washed in the gold Of the sun's going: There was the hush of waiting Known at the birth of night, As countless silent phantoms creep Along the earth, holding in their hands The shadows they are bringing To veil the eves of sleep. There was the music Of the many chirping things That sing the silence of the night, And the haunting scent of flowers In some lost and distant dream; The hovering sense of many wings Brushing the stillness of the heart With feathered silence— Wings that flutter and are gone; And there was the beauty of the moon, Which thrust the clouds aside

THE STORM

That for a moment she might see The sleeping earth. Then, as the wings of night Enfold the day. So did your tender arms Enfold and hold me in the night; And when the storm crept up the valley, Scattering the leaves. And the trees caught the wind And made it sing. And a few pattering drops Fell from the sheltering eaves, You did love me. And then the titan tempest rose And swept the hills And drove us on its wings to the sea. And the trees sobbed and moaned Beneath the gale. While trees and branches Ready for the reaping Crashed and fell. And the driven rain splashed Against the window panes And came in rivers from the eaves. Then the sea rose from its bed And hurled and lashed The wind-swept, barren shore. And in the storm were scattered, far and wide, The seeds another storm shall reap.

YOUR TOUCH

Even as in spring, when the ice breaks,
And the river is in flood,
Singing over rocks,
Surging over moss-strewn cliffs
To drop from there in darkling pools,
Where diamonds dance and sparkle in the sun,
And pearls, one by one
Go quivering to and fro,
Even such is the music that I know
In your touch.

FOR LOVING YOU

What is it weighs me down to-day, With a weight that is sweet, Like the burden gladly borne For some beloved?

Is it the shadow of your nearness, The sense of you too near to me, Which, though it weighs me down, Yet brings with it some comfort?

Or is it just the weight of all my lives I feel oppressing,
In years which I would lift
And throw aside,
To live again that other life
Where I so gladly died
For loving you.

LOVE

Love which holds back Something in reserve Will never know The joy of giving, The joy of constant death.

REST, MY SWEET

REST with your arm outstretched, my sweet,
That I may rest there too,
And all the hours that you sleep,
I shall be loving you,
And while we rest and sleep, my dear,
God will hold us two.

FULL MOON

The moon is full,
Sea flooding,
Sap flowing.
The moon is full,
My thoughts winging,
My man wooing.
The moon is full.

THE SUN'S WOOING

THERE is no dalliance here.

Here is a titan love that seeks a myriad breasts for wooing,

That pierces the Earth with a million ardent spears:

Here every ray that enters leaves a fertile womb.

YOU ASK ME

You ask me if I love you, And I answer that I do.

You ask me why I love you,
And I find it hard to say.
I come to you.
You answer every need.
Your love is all the reason
That my love can give
For loving you.

Love you always?
That I cannot say.
It rests with you;
You lead me now,
You point the way
And I gladly follow
While I may.
Love is an awakening,
Another birth,
A closer homing
To our mother earth,

YOU ASK ME

I shall love you always, Yet shall ever seek and follow The brighter light, The fuller love. The larger truth absorbs the lesser, Else why my love for you?

MARRIED

You who have given me your name,
And with your laws have made me wife,
To share your failures or your fame,
What proof has made me yours for life?

In spite of all the laws you've made
I'm free. I am no part of you.
And wait, the last word is not said:
You're mine, for I'm myself and you.

All through my veins there flows your blood: In you there is no part of me. By force of this my motherhood Through me you live eternally.

TAKE ME

I only ask that you will Take me, That you make me serve Your will. Use me well or use me ill. I'll not care If you but have your will. I only ask that you will Take me Till you have had your fill. Use me well or use me ill, I'll not care. Try to kill me If you will. I know the woman Here in me Will tame the man in you, And that your tenderness Will be As tender as my own, And when your heart Is stilled

TAKE ME

And you have had Your fill, You will know your love Was but to serve My will!

WOUNDS

EVEN as the oyster, from the grain Of sand that tortured, Upbuilt the pearl, I captured from the world All the beauty that I found And wound it round my pain, And with it crowned my love.

When he tore away
The wonder I had brought
He could not understand
The blood upon his hand.

GOD

THE love I loved you with Is God.

I HAVE UNDERSTOOD

I MAY not love you
As another would,
For I have lived too fully,
I have understood.
I may not love you
As another would,
For in the heart that I should bring
You'd feel the pulse of every woman
Who has loved
And suffered for her love.
I have lived in each,
Feeling her pain was mine.
I am all these women,
So I may not love you
As another would.

THE EAGLE

You Eagle that would be alone
And cry your solitude
To the day and to the night,
And gaze upon the stars
That bred you,
Dreaming to be aloof,
To be ever one and alone,
Know you may never, now . . .
For on a sunlit mountain top
You found a mate.
Though now you would forget
And still would be alone,
Your mate has built a nest.

NOTHING TO SAY

WHY LOSE OUR WAY

NAY, Love, why lose our way in words, Why try to understand the things of earth Save through the spirit?
Love like ours has given birth
To countless wingèd thoughts
That draw us each to each.
Nay, Love, what matters speech
With love like this between?
What matters anything to us
Who have this dream?

CHANCE

For months I looked for a sign: Some word to tell your mood. And now By some unknown chance, I know.

WE TWO

This loving may not be unloved, We are together now; We two in the hand of God. We have been alone, Each in a world That knows no pity. This loving may not be unloved.

THE EMPTY CUP

Why does my love not see
The empty cup
I am holding up
For him to fill?
Why does he drink of mine
And find good wine
To meet his will,
And still not see
The empty cup
I am holding up
For him to fill?

WOUNDED

I AM wounded by an unknown thing That is not I, Brooding with alien wing Here where I lie.

LOST

HEAP flowers on my head. Now that you have lost me Crown me with stone, For this long-loved beauty Sleeps with the dead.

Heap flowers on my head. Now that you have lost me Dream of the lip you kissed, Dream of the lost beauty Of the soul you missed.

Heap flowers on my head, Now that I am gone. Now that you have lost me Crown me with stone.

O TAKE MY DREAMS

O TAKE my dreams,
And use them—
You who have no dreams—
Take and crush them,
Crush and bruise them,
Like the vinèd fruit;
Make of them your wine.
So shall you drink
And dream,
So shall my dreams be fused,
So shall the purple of my life
Bear fruit.
O take my dreams!

MAN

Man, loving beauty, woos To overtake and seize; Then, for a moment's ease, Slays the thing he pursues.

TIME

Time, Man has found some fallen feathers from your wings.

He has named this one an hour, that one a day, others years.

Collecting them and counting them he sits, Towering above them at his play.

So when I catch the flash of sunlight on your wings,

And count the years that hours hold And days that are centuries old With nothing after, I hear beyond the walls of space Your pinioned laughter.

WHAT MIGHTY WOOING

What mighty wooing has been here That brought from out the spheres The earth submissive to the sun! What titan pulse Has thrilled in primal force Before the triumph won!

When the earth was young And had but winds for play, She gave birth to mountains, And tore from her living heart Great rivers that the sea might be, And her imperial pulse Was the beating of eons' wings That thundered past her In her dreams.

And now the creeping pulse of time Is no deeper than our days and nights, And men forget to dream.

YOUR LOVING AND MY DESPAIR

I MAY have died, my dear, for all your care; Died between your loving and my despair.

You brought your disillusioned heart to rest Between the lordly summits of my breast,

And so, warmed and at ease, your loving slept, Giving no word, no sign, nor once upleapt

In dream of pilgrimage to reach the snows

That crown the path the storm-pressed eagle
knows.

I may have died, my dear, for all your care, Died between your loving and my despair.

IN THAT ULTIMATE HOUR

In that ultimate hour, Sweet,
When past and future
Meet in you and me,
My spirit reaches out to you
With arms that are outworn,
With unseeing eyes,
With voice long mute,
With lips that ages past
Have done with kissing.
Then, in that ultimate hour, Sweet,
I know why God is silent,
Why God neither sees nor speaks,
Why those unenfolding arms
Have left me free.



Part II THE MOTHER



WOMAN

My mother, Earth, Is plowed
And harrowed
For the sowing.
Like my mother, Earth, I bear the blossoms,
I do the growing,
I bear the fruit,
The seed
For sowing.

I AM A WOMAN

I AM a woman
And have lived a woman's way
With life.
Now am I big with new life
Soon to have birth.
Take me in your arms
And hold me there,
For the treasure
That I bear
Is rare
And of great worth.

I have travelled
Over land and sea,
Everywhere life loving me.
There is no beauty
Of the sky
Or earth
That does not live in me.
Life was prodigal in loving,
Life gave his all to me.
There is no thought

I AM A WOMAN

That has come to life But life has given me. There is no further knowledge Of the soul Than life has whispered me. Life tells me There is no other god Than the god that lives in me; I am burdened with the seeds Of my lover's sowing. I know my time has come, So take me in your arms And hold me there. For the treasure That I bear Is rare And worth your knowing.

BIRTH

As death, with grim
Uncertain features hid
In formless night,
Slips in to draw unto himself
The spent and dying year, behold
The light, which from his invisible
Mantle now shines
Upon the new-born year,
Who comes with head erect and shining limbs.

BLUE

To-day the sky
Is a glorious blue;
I find blue asters too.
O sky, where have you too
Found this magic blue?

You will not tell? Then shall I ask my little girl And she will say, Whose eyes to-day are blue Where yesterday was gray.

MY BOY

His eyes are wild and close to nature, Understanding things unknown, Things which are in us and beyond us, All of beauty.

His features are perfect, Like a young god's; But it is the look That startles you And holds you.

MY GIRL

Has your slim white body, child,
Come a shafted arrow from the sun?
For this brightness of you
Dazzles in the whiteness
Of the beauty you have won.
I would know why
You so wonderfully come,
Lithe and straight and true!
Swift bearer of some message
From the sun!
Speak! Unloose your tongue,
That I and all the world may know
Why and whence you come,
Whither you shall go.

MY BLISS

Who sing of kisses and of loves,
And passion whence they spring,
Have never known my love which proves
Their own a lesser thing.

When my small girl and I must part, Though brief her clasping be, There is no passion-flowered heart That blooms like hers for me.

In my son's arms, while resting still
Against his heart, my bliss
Exceeds your own . . . I could not thrill
So to a lover's kiss.

HER PLAID

On a peg against the wall
Hangs her little Scotch-plaid frock,
With its white about the throat and sleeves.
She hung it there before she went to sleep.
Still sweet with the fragrance
And warmth of her slim body,
How it holds her shape,
And takes the contour of her form!
Of late she's grown quite tall.
I see the coming woman
In her gown upon the wall.

TO MY SON

Your fair young body Like a willow wand bends And swavs with all the springing grace Of youth, long and lithe in limb, Seeking like the willow reed the sun. If you would be a sturdy willow tree, Set your roots deep in earth, And let me be The water where you bend. For I have seen a wan willow Lean against a brook And take its joy in dreaming, Seen the joy within its look As it found its image in the brook. And though the willow subtly drew Its strength up from the brook, A time came when it gave back What it took. And the willow shook out all its golden leaves And tossed them scattered on the brook.

SUNBURN

With loins wrapped,
Your black body
On its back
Upon the dunes,
And the magic ring
Your out-stretched hands
Draw around you
On the sands,
Make of you
A black bambino
On a yellow plaque.

TO A SON GOING TO WAR

How may I bear this pain? Must I see you come wounded home, With all your glowing beauty gone? Must that proud spirit Wear an alien form? How may I bear this pain, I, who have known my heart To ache and bleed, And felt my soul quiver In the very pride of its pain, That you might come A conquering god to earth? Must I, who gave my beauty For your birth, Now see that beauty slain? What man has right to ask For this-again?

SEEK WITHIN

CHILD, when in trouble
Or in pain,
Lock fast your gate
And seek the cause within.
Thus shall you seize
And capture it.
Lock fast your gate,
Lest the cur escape
To sleep, or whine
At another's door.

TO MY SONS

The consecrated passion Of my youth, My will and all my strength I gave to you to use. My task is ended When you have learned There is no greater force Than this-my love for you. I give you all to life; Life has a greater claim than I. You have a right To your experience, To live, to suffer, and to learn. My task to stand aside. If you have learned To be the god of your own life, And see both heaven and hell. As here and made by you, And know the world Is but the larger self. One heart, one life, one goal, And all humanity The living soul of God, My work is done.

MY CHILD IS DEAD

My child is dead.

Yet, though God has punished, I have not sinned, Nor wronged a human soul In thought or deed.

My child is dead.

Yes, and they will bury him. Unknowing they will take my life And lay it there with him.

My child is dead.

Oh show me where the justice,
Where the wrong in me!
I have failed,
I am blind,
I cannot see.
My child is dead.

WAR

The hours creep by to-day,
A maimed and crippled throng,
All that are left to speak
Of the wingèd nights that were,
And dawns that marched
In stately column,
With love triumphant,
And with music.
Now is their tread
The tramp of stumbling feet,
Their song a mumbled prayer.
These mourning hours, soulless and pale,
Struggling to build each day,
Cry out against the wrong.

IT IS NOT TRUE

They came to tell me in the night That you are dead.

It is not true!—

For flowers grown by you Still bloom and toss the head.

It is not true

That you are dead!

The birds you loved now wing Their many-coloured notes To a coming sun,

10 a coming sun, Which pours a golde

Which pours a golden anthem Out along the spring.

How may this be

If you are dead?

It is not true!

You have out-flown the prison cell We have known you in, That you might fling The spirit of your beauty

Out across the world.

It is not true
That you are dead!

THIS MOTHER-LOVE

This mother-love is deeper than you know. Its roots spring from childhood
When I dreamed
Of what a mother's love might be.
It reached the dawn in maidenhood,
And in marriage faced the sun.
And as its flowers blossomed
One by one, its roots went deeper,
And when it learned to weep
And still to keep its sweetness,
I thought the dream complete.
And now comes this storm
To sweep me,
That I may deeper go to seek
And find the truth beyond my dream.

SON'S STRENGTH

To my sons my strength has been a tower
At whose feet the lashing sea of life has broken.
They have seen its beacon
Glowing through my night,
And known it there to light their own.
Its beam has shown to them the real and the unreal,

And they have seen the empty fluttering things of life

Fall with burnt wings and drift away.

Now do I see each has builded him a tower, A tower greater than my own, A tower whose strength a world shall know. Each son bears now his lamp whose glow Shall carry far to light new worlds, To search new truths, A lamp whose gleam and glow Shall dim my own.

To them my lamp burns low. Now shall it go where all burnt candles go; The star my heart now follows Is the truth they bear, Their strength my own.

SON'S LOVE

One time my son's eyes wore a look
That told me his world slept
With love between his gaze and mine.
Now though I see his love for me still there,
Between us lies a newer world I may not
enter—
One he has made with her.

THE SWAN

I was,
I am,
I shall be.
Breasting the sea,
I draw with me
These three—
I was,
I am,
I shall be.

THE SHADOW

Wно watch their lengthening shadow on the ground
Have turned their faces from the sun.

THE TREE

You have given all your branches to the winds For harp.
With rooted arms you have held the earth,
And clasped the sunlight
With your leafy hands.
You have watched rain drip
From your green fingertips.
With up-flung head,
With laughter and with song,
You have challenged
All the skies.
You have given birth
To singing shadows.

I have given all my body to a man For joy.
My arms have nested babies,
My hand has held my welling breast
To curling infant lips.
Looking down on laughing children
I have watched
For a while

THE TREE

Their shadows lengthen,
Then faced again the sun,
Learning from you
To smile and be at peace,
And never tire
While shadows form and flow . . .
You have gone deeper into things
Than I,
You have gone higher.

THE FUTURE

ALONG the ages
Men have cried
Their gods,
While women followed
With their worship
And their praise.
Now in recent days
One comes and says
"I am His Son."
Men cry again:
He is the One.
But a woman cries:
"He is my son,"
And the miracle is done.

Yet woman knows Her work undone, Till man shall claim The god as son.



Part III THE WOMAN



WHY?

Why have I
This sturdy strength
Born of the North,
These eyes of steel—
Why these things,
With this sun-warmed
Passion of the South,
This sun-wooed
Quivering mouth—
Why,
When I find
No steel
To challenge mine,
No lips
To cool my drouth?

CAT BRIARS

THE cat briar leaves Were caught By frost, And turned To olive gold And burnished bronze, The berries Were nile green. When they dream In happier days, The sun Gleams through Green shining leaves, Of jade And fruit Of dusted blue.

WHEN I go. Let none be sad. Let all sing, Sing and be glad. Shed no tears For wasted years, For all my hours Were crowned With flowers, For love Left a halo On my hair, for light, When none was there. Those who knew me Know that I shall live In all of life: Others will not care.

In the spring, When the birds sing, Friends will hear me there, In the call of the quail,

With summer over all the earth, In the waterfall,
And laughing brook,
In the hay,
In the corn shooks,
In the vintage,
And the harvest,
In winter snow and frost,
In all the life we know.

Sometimes Whispering in the sighing rain; A tear In a mother's pain; Mist shadowing the tryst Of lovers, in the spring: In waves Kissing children's feet; As light in their eyes, And laughter on their hair. Moon-rise. Noonday skies, Dawns. Eventides: In blue shadows Of hav cocks, On marshes, by the sea; Sand-dunes, and sea grass Silver-hued.

In rocks. Carved by the laughter of the sea, Smooth or rough-hewn, Beaches strewn with kelp And spume: In pools, on the shore, Holding stars; And the far cry Of soaring gulls, Echoing along the cliffs, As they dip and wheel. In the curve of lips. After kissing. In a woman's breast, and hips; In the throb and tumult Of city streets; The pulse and rhythm and hiss Of engines: The touch of bow On violin. Sunlight, Flashing on a wing. The straining muscle Raised with the hammer For the blow. In the grace and curve Of road, and bridge; Happy faces: In all the glad, sad

And glorious ways of life My friends shall find me,— But most surely Shall they find me In the immensity of the sea; There at all times Shall I be.

AFTER PAIN

After all the pain I wake to-day
To hear my heart
Sing.
It is like
A mountain stream
After rain
In spring,
So full it is
Of fun
And laughter.

THIS RAINBOW

This rainbow
Is a many-coloured bridge
By which my dreams
May go.

WHEN THE STORM BREAKS

When the storm breaks
And the wind wakes
The ghosts of memory
And dream,
And sobbing notes come
Slipping from the eaves,
Then I will rise
And go into the night
To meet the tempest,
And it shall tear and strip me.
For I know the storm
Will reap in me
The dead things
And give the living wings.

MY WILL

My will is no giant thing; It is but a child. Yet its arm girdles a world, And in its hand are stars.

SEA LACE

Each breaking wave Leaves great bands Of woven lace Upon the sands, Torn and scattered By the next wave's Ruthless hands.

THE SPIDER

You wove a cobweb through the night Your dream of life and beauty Hanging by a thread.
So do I seize my right
To draw through my own night
My dream
To hang and gleam
Above my head.

THE VEIL

A magic veil
Broods over the earth.
Spring is here,
The time of loving,
And of sowing,
Of birth
And growing.

JANUARY THAW, CAPE COD

Held fast in claws of frost,
The earth lies sere,
When from the south a whisper comes
Of spring elsewhere,
Then silent the winter thaw
Steals among all living things,
Bringing to the land release,
Singing, many-tongued.

Again the glory of the autumn wakes
In scarlet oak, in faun-hued bracken;
Golden pines challenge sun and sky;
Paper leaves cling to beech trees;
Grey boles of willow by the lake
Hold golden branches tipped with flame;
Salt marshes raise their tawny heads,
Shaking them free of ice,
Once more to stretch their arms in bluer seas.
Where cat-briar weaves its tracery of green,
Buds on bushes flush to rose, dreaming of spring.
Scattered oak leaves cling and cluster,

JANUARY THAW, CAPE COD

A mass of autumn's afterglow, Amber, flame and gold.

Fields of ochre gleam in silence,
In silence sing.
Emerald crops of winter wheat toss
A pæan to the sun, a prayer, a benison.
Flocking birds hovering await the spring,
A robin calls.
Beyond the dunes
Trumpets and thunders
The Sea.

HANDS

From rock and cliff and crag,
From the softest sands,
From granite, peat and slag
I sense emerging hands.

Hands that from the night
Reach out to find the day.
Blind, unseeing might
Making its way.

SLEEP

HYMN no joy of sleep to me Who lay long years Awake beside a sleeping man.

I was brave from day to day, Wearing my loneliness as a crown; But when night came I was again a beggar, Gnawing at the grief The sleeping stranger gave.

MY HEART FARES SOUTH

My heart fares south to-night On wings of dream . . . There, where the spring new-born Is sweet with scent of earth And fragrant flowers, My spirit wanders, And I dream . . .

Soon the spring grown brave
Will northward creep to me,
With warm and tender hands
Will feel her way along the hills,
Trailing as she comes her mantle green
Wrought with jasmine and cherry bloom.
Her touch will wake the earth,
A thousand springs will live again in her,
A thousand springs in me will answer.

WHEN I UNCAPTAINED GO

When I uncaptained go
Out into the night
Let none weep for me,
And let no alien hands
Touch me in my last sleep;
Only the hands of him
Who loved me.
He will remember.

WHEN I AM DEAD

I hope that none
Will place dead flowers
Above my head
For grace,
When I am dead,
No garland that will fade,
No stone
Disfigured by a name;
Let me wear instead
The glory of the whole
Wide universe
As crown
Above my head.

MEMORY

While days were weaving into nights, Nights into days, I ran with laughter at your side—Eternity a dancing faun Along the wide way, Between the walls to-morrow Made with yesterday.

Lying still,
Warmed by the sun
Upon the hill,
You found an ancient skull
And jesting flung it wide.
Then called to me again
To come and run
At your side.

You did not know
I one time buried deep
Below this hill
An old dull pain—
And so felt perhaps this

MEMORY

Passion-emptied skull Might once have throbbed Enthroned above the lips That mine had kissed.

LOVERS

SLEEPING I float upon a darkening sea, Deep-cargoed with unravished dream. Lovers, as beacon-swords of light, Reach out on every side Across the sea, Piercing the night To come to me.

Far out across the distant wide Death's wings sweep up. They goad and lash the sea, They rend the night with flame, Oncoming to compass me.

Sleeping I sink beneath this weight Of heavy dreaming, Bruised by the clash of flame, Stabbed with the gleam of swords, Along the sea, While over me In gold and scarlet thread, Cobwebbed above my head, Upbuilds a sheet of fire.

LOVERS

Sleeping I sigh,
Glad to go,
Glad to die,
Lying so,
With all this fiery gold
Fold on fold
Above my head . . .
I open wide my eyes
To find my lover in my bed.

THE POET

Who would place the laurel on his brow To crown him poet, have not found him. The voice that sings is not his own. It is the voice of all the years, The countless years. Since first the breath of man Answered to the urge within, and stirred Man himself the poet. Here one but speaks for him Even as the weavers weave for him, Even as he who wields the plough-share Ploughs for him. And he who would wear the laurel On his brow. Has not found the truth, Believes the songs are his, His alone the voice that cries Solitary in the wilderness.

THE WIND

Who am I, Wanderer in your night, Who stir your leaves To murmur in the dark To stars?

Who am I,
Who lift and peer
Beneath your greenery,
Who listen
As you gleam
And glisten?

Who am I
But a mood
To rouse you to reveal
Another self—
Wanderer in your night—
Who am I? . . .
Who are you?

MEMORIES

Is it a storm I hear upon the hill
Or thunder of old pain that rages
And will not yield to time's assuages?
Again that flare and flash! Nay, all is still.
And yet—my cabin quivers or I dream,
Conscious of prowling memories that shake
My strength. Hush Hark The
wind is in the brake
Or footsteps come across the floor I
seem
To hear a hand along the door Hush!
Hear
The sob, the tear, the rain along the eaves,
The rush of flying wind among the leaves,
That human sigh within. Hush, hark again, for
here
The room throbs and murmurs, while near and
far
Old memories rise and flash asunder
Grip and clash again in crash of thunder
Is there no force in heaven to out-star
The starriest star, to out-stay these ghosts

MEMORIES

Of thought and dream haunting these nights and days?

Has heaven no self-appointed ways

To curb the tumult of these wandering hosts?

Again! . . by the bed . . . I hear a voice long dead . . .

Nay! I'll not stay within. I'll fly and face
The storm outside! . . . I go, and find the
grace

Of a still night with stars above my head.

DESERTED

How vast, how empty
Are the reaches
Of this deserted bed.
How lonely;
It is the loneliness of space
I cannot face.
It teaches
Elemental things to me,
Who thought me wise.

RESTLESS

Nor be restless?
Ask the beach not to burn
When the sea has left it;
Ask the tide not to turn;
Tell the day
Not to leave us,
And the night to stay!

MY DEAR

My name was so beautiful
On your lips;
Speak it sometimes
In the night,
And I shall hear;
Whisper to the night
"My dear."

THE GOLDEN GODS

With all my being in my song
There are no gods along the road to fear.
Evil is here where dead men bury dead,
Onward there is no evil way. Echo
After echo of my song wings on ahead.
The golden gods are calling, I must go.

AUTUMN

Ι

The pillars of my gate
Are aflame
With leaves.
In spring,
When they were green,
They crept unseen
Along the garden wall.
Now the note they sing
Is the swan-song
Of the spring,
The note, whose memory
Shall cling
Beyond the snows,
And meet
The blue bird's wing.

II

Among the vines Climbing On the cottage eaves, I see to-day

101

AUTUMN

Some dripping Crimson leaves. They speak to me Of hearts That bleed In anguish over seas.

Ш

The old witches
In the corn shooks
Shake their heads
And look the other way;
Sad, they wave
Their withered hands
From tattered rags.
In the sun,
In serried rows
They come, they go,
Bowed and old,
Yet we know
Beneath the dun they wear,
Their arms are full of gold.

IV

The mill-pond Sleeps in peace. All summer long It was a gleaming lake

102

AUTUMN

Of greens and blues, Now it mirrors autumn tints, And bears upon its breast of blue An argosy of ships With sails of many hues.

V

On the mountain pass
The snow clings
To autumn leaves;
Snow,
Gleaming gold,
Showing green,
Glowing crimson.
Though Autumn fled
Swift-footed
From the frost,
I know she passed
With bleeding feet
Along the snow.
Where I tread
The path is red.

YOUTH

Youth, you and I have been long together.
Now must you go your way, I mine.
I did not think so late to have you with me,
Yet you have stayed,
Perhaps because you loved me.
Now must you go your way, I mine.
The beauty of the singing ways
We have come,
The wingèd days we shared,
And the nights with their golden hours,
Shall shine upon my path
And make it seem less grey.
But the days will be strange without you,
The nights will be long.

Now must you go your way, I mine.

AGE

As I pass,
Sometimes in amaze
I stand before my glass
And smile, gazing
Incredulous at the ways
Of youth smiling back at me.
Then look beyond
Where, grim, behind me,
Poised, in silence waiting—
Stands my shadow.
Though I will not see,
I know
My shadow never smiles.

MIRAGE

(Woman to Man)

I AM lying With the vast earth At my back. It is upholding me. The lure of the earth Is in my eyes. Through me you strive and drive To reach the earth. In seeming triumph And with song, Ever you rise to the encounter. Though you have conquered me, Age after age, You have not won the earth. Though you come on, Renewing in each age The ancient struggle to win through, When your years are spent I am lying here

MIRAGE

With the vast earth At my back; I am here Between the earth and you.



Part IV OTHER WOMEN



FACES

HAVE you pulled the veils away From lonely faces, And seen dark corridors Leading to silent places? Have you peered in eyes that weep, And seen the solitude They keep? Have you read the lines On faces that are grey And guessed what would soften These away? Have you known the eyes That pass alight and glowing, Leaving a shadow In their going? Have you seen the joy Of dream fulfilled. The curving of the lip That love has caught And stilled?

So are you blessed indeed— So have you learned the need

FACES

To pull the veils away, To find the day Behind the night, The night behind the day.

WHAT IS THE SEA

What is the sea? It is the tears We women weep That love may be.

THE LOOM

ONCE, long ago, you placed within my hands, Belovèd,

The golden threads shorn from your baby head.

Then was I again a mother,
Feeling the joy, the pain, the hope
Born of that other who gave you birth.
And as I held these threads of gold
My thoughts turned golden,
Sweeping back across the years,
Until your own sweet mother
Lived for me, and her heart throbbed with
mine

To hear you voice such tender memories. And all this gold I wove into my dream.

O what gold I had for weaving!
Such gold was never seen upon the loom of time.

I took for design an old-world pattern, Such as maids and mothers weave

THE LOOM

When their hearts sing to them, And they conceive.

With my golden thoughts I used the golden threads

From your baby head to weave into my dream.

And when at the last you asked for them,

I faced the task of seeking every thread you claimed.

And the old-time pattern that I wove Is rent, and wet with tears, And all its threads are scattered to the winds. There are no days, no nights, Only the patient years.

TO A BUTTERFLY

While your wings
Flash the sunlight,
And memory clings
To the quivering touch of wind
That lifted and pursued you
Through the blue,
You do as women do,
You give to life
Your wings.
You give in ecstasy
To unborn things.

HIS MOTHER

STRANGE woman of lost dreams Haunting my days and my nights With your sweet presence, What may I do for you? What rests undone that love can do? I have come to you in silent thought, To you I have brought my grief, And always in my pain Your arms sustain me, And when I weep you dry my tears. Yet in your silent presence The voice of my lost dream Taunts my loneliness, And tells me of my beloved, Seeking too, through you, That lost and cherished dream. O show me the way! Strange woman of lost dreams.

OTHER TEARS

When I am radiant in my joy,
And feel no happiness outstrips my own,
When friends and life conspire
To pour into my lap
Their countless blessings,
And all my heart's a song,
I know that somewhere in the world
A child is dying,
A mother weeps,
New life is struggling
To the light.

OTHER JOY

Though I am prostrate weeping mother's tears
And feel that there can be no greater loss,
No pain to equal mine,
I know that somewhere else
Are many hearts rejoicing,
Wedding bells are pealing,
A bride trips home,
Somewhere a child is singing,
Though I weep.

LIFE

She darns black patches
On his socks of grey,
And white on black.
She loves him in her way.

I darn his socks of grey,With grey,His black with black.I too love him in my way.

In his way
He loves another—
Her who will not darn his socks
Black or grey.

THE GREAT WRONG

O women, weep not For the sons ye bore, But weep for the great wrong Done to love Through War.

A FARMER'S WIFE

I'm alone tonight. From the sea The moon has risen Mellow and full. As it climbs, the bay steals its colour; A tree shows against the moonlight, Where turkeys are roosting for the night. From the meadow, grazing in silence, A flock of sheep passes Like a mass of drifting cloud. I hear the call of a mallard, The honking of wild geese Flying south. In the house the fire glows, My candle sputters, A cricket sings upon the hearth. My man snores.

TWO FACES

I saw two faces in a crowd,
One wrapped in fur, over-fed,
Gone soft from indolence,
The other lean, hungry-eyed,
Shivering with bared head.
Neither smiled. . . .
One wore jewels around her neck.
She whose spirit had not died
Bore slumbering jewels in her eyes.

THE MADONNA

With babe on arm and weary load
That she had carried through the rain,
And clothes all muddied, hat awry,
She waited for the evening train.

Her eyes fell dully on the crowd;
There was no light in them to see,
No faith, no remnant gleam of hope:
Her eyes spoke only tragedy.

And yet all eyes that turned from hers

Lay hostile on her child that wailed

And broke the peace. . . . A mother, I

Knew that this mother's milk had failed,

And took the child from her tired arm
And gave it milk from my own breast. . .

I know no artist yet has ever caught
The real Madonna with her child at rest.

MARY

I would not paint a young and fair Madonna, Mother of the infant child.

I would paint the mother of the man,
The woman who has felt pain,
And suffered for her truth;
Who has made a glory of her wrong
Bearing it with courage and with pride;
The one who can smile and keep her faith
When Christ and child have died.

THE STRANGER

SHE scorned me passing, As I washed the floor: Later I was but a human spring Which opened wide a door That she might enter in. When she met me in my diamonds And my pearls, she thought me fair, And then she smiled and knew me. She claimed me as her friend. Yet another day when I met her in the street And asked her for some bread That I might feed my starving child, She turned her eyes away. As I staggered past her, spent and weary Of my load, one freezing day, She would not see me pass, She was blind and would not see. When once I flaunted my way as a harlot, we met.

met,
And again she scorned me utterly.
Nor did she know me coming of another race;

I was a stranger to her always,

THE STRANGER

With black or yellow face:
Again when I laughed and danced
In the joy of heedless youth
She drove my joy away.
And when a crippled child
Cried out in its pain, her laughter
Drowned its voice. I thought her wild
Not to know this child was hers.
Poor stranger! Can she not see
She lives in every other woman
As every other woman lives in her and me?

THE PATHWAY

A single narrow path Led me through the pines To the summit of a hill. And there I found a mansion Gaunt, ghostly and alone, A dim light only in a distant wing . . . But when the seasons came again, I took once more the path And found an open way Trodden by many feet. The sun was everywhere: And when I reached the summit Where once the mansion stood There was now a solitary hut. The sunlight played With the shadows on the shingles; And through the open window A voice came soft and low. The voice of a woman singing.

THE HARLOT'S CUP

A STRANGE woman From an Eastern land Took my gold, and Looking at my hand, Told me my love Had been untrue, Untrue to me. She was overbold, and said, "To drown some memory And ease his thirst. He stooped to drink From a harlot's cup." And when in wrath I rose to leave her, She flung a ribald laugh To follow after me, And said: "The harlot's curse Be on his head!"

SLOWLY A WOMAN CLIMBS

SLOWLY a woman climbs the steps
That lead her to her home.
She drags her feet.
The house looks dead, its windows
Stare empty-eyed into the street,
And from the way the woman walks
I know her eyes give back
The window's stare,
And by the way she turns the handle
Of the door and goes within,
I know the woman's soul
Is not in there.

GRIEVE IF YOU MUST

GRIEVE if you must,
Who do not feel
The bursting bud and leaf.
Grieve for your dead,
For hopes that now are wingless,
For dreams whose lips are sealed;
Grieve if you must.
Your bowed vision
Sees but the woe
Your folded wings entomb.

Grieve if you must,
But first lift your face to the sun;
Then shall you run
With perfumed hours,
Through sunny fields
Flushing into flower.
Then shall you see
The plumèd song of birds
Tinting the wings of spring,
And the full choir
Of resonant colour

GRIEVE IF YOU MUST

Shall hymn you back to other springs, And on to new.

Grieve if you must,
But first lift up your head,
To see the fallen limb.
From this lost thing,
Yielding itself from hour to hour
To the spring,
Watch the new life
Leaping into flower.

Grieve if you must, But first lift up your face To see the heavens weep. They weep that life may be, That brooks may sing, And rivers run full-hearted To the sea.

Grieve if you must,
But first lift up your eyes
To where the turgid oak-bud
Flings the dry leaf;
See how the wind
Takes the dead thing
To laugh and dance with it,
Singing as it goes.
All winter long

GRIEVE IF YOU MUST

The wind has made its song With these sere wings, Chanting from every tree A thousand strong. Above the snows Forest rang to forest, Chiming the spring They were to usher in.

Grieve if you must: The sun will make A rainbow Of your tears.

HER LOVE

HER love, she said, was deep. Yet would she weep To see him share His joy, Or find elsewhere.

HER JOY

HER joy was for a day. Yet into that day Were woven tears, And the sorrow Of another woman's Years.

THE FACTORY WALL

I was happy in the old place. In the yard was sun.
Things there grew straight and true, Green, with flowers peeping through. A brook crept by,
Sometimes boisterous with noise
Of warning tears. But in the sun,
Dreaming, I was happy.

That was long ago.

Now by the old place
A factory is built.
Where was once the sun
Is now the blank face of a wall;
Blindly, my thought tries to grope
Beyond it seeking hope,
But finds the wall too high.
The yard is full of soot and smoke,
Where things grow crooked;
Flowers choke and die.
There is no green to look at
Any time.

THE FACTORY WALL

The brook, now, is a ditch of slime Which smells and cries its shame. Here, each year, a baby came; They came crooked, too; And died: every one.

There are now six graves
In the grim old yard
Where once slim lilies grew.

I am not happy now;
I can no longer dream;
Something in me craves
The sun. And you,
You others,
On the other side the wall,
Are you blinded by the sun?
Do your babies wither?
Does your spirit fade?
Because you've all the sunlight?
Because you've lost the shade?

THE THIEF

SHE came to you, she said,
To bring you gifts.
You welcomed her;
Your eyes shone
Upon her face,
Her gifts, her youth, her grace.

When you waked You found she had gone. You felt a loss, A sense of wrong. You did not know, Until you came again To sing to me, She had robbed you Of the gift of song.

ONE WOMAN

SHE took no favour in the dark. Those who brought their gifts Brought them, one by one, by day. So, in taking, she stood With eyes that faced the sun, Eyes that none might question; She took alone from him Whose eyes could meet her own, Unfearful of the light. She took no gift Save for the giver's sake, And for the right of giving. She would not take, As others do. Those little gifts That shuffle, fearful of the light: She would not give to those Who hide their gifts Under the skirt of night.

YOUR FEET

SHE ran to meet you.
You were so swift,
So fleet in coming,
She thought your feet
Were winged and sandalled;
You were to her as sunlight
Streaming through an opened door.
She never dreamed
That in your going
You would leave this clay
Upon her garment,
This clay upon her floor.

SHE CAME

Harlot hearted,
With laughter
And with song,
With eyes that danced
Unashamed
Above her flaming breasts.
The woman came.
As she passed,
The man followed after.

I wonder if he thought, I wonder if she said, Some word Of her lover Two weeks dead?

A STRANGER

SHE held a lordly favour Only a prince might name. She gave it to a stranger, One to me unknown.

Now I know him, . . . For he left the hill, And came, Under cover of the night. To me.

THE MILL

If the mill that grinds the corn should break, The stream would still run on and women bake

WHO LIGHTLY COME

I STAND and watch them come and go, These women, who so lightly give And take according to their mood, Unheedful of the deeper depth in you. With the glow of love upon you. You are to them the beacon In a midnight sea. Like lost birds Drifting with the storm, They fling their empty lives Against the light they see, And fall with bruised wing. Never once touching This inner thing in you. These have no heed, no thought Of you and of the spirit's need, These dream not of the rocks Below the beacon's flame. Rocks laid in years Of patient toil together, And bound by strength of friendship The battering sea cannot dislodge.

WHO LIGHTLY COME

They have no heed of these. They have no need to know Who come so lightly And so lightly go.

A SONG FOR WOMEN

I would be off and away, I would be on the dunes With the sea and the salt. With the smell of the kelp, On my lips, the taste of the spray, Watching the birds of the sea Dip to the blue, and soar. I would weep to the tune Of the ruthless wave Swept in from the deep Of the seamen's grave. And dance on the shore To the shade of myself, Dance in the light of the sun, Dance as never a one Has danced— Weep as never a one has wept.

For I am the wind And I am the wave. I am the earth, the sea and the sun. For I am the womb and I am the grave,

A SONG FOR WOMEN

I the cradle, I the tomb.
I am the joy, the pain.
I have died these things to find;
I have died to live again.

I would be off and away,
I would be on the dunes
With the sea and the salt,
With the smell of the kelp,
On my lips, the taste of the spray.









